

layout for living

- new town: deep river
- action to date on october resolutions
- low rent housing

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layout for living

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interim report: action since october

Members at the First Annual Meeting and Conference in Montreal last October passed seven resolutions requiring further action. The texts of those resolutions were printed in LAYOUT FOR LIVING No. 9 (November 1947). A resume of action to date is now in order.

The most extended discussion preceded the resolution on low rental housing; the full text of the subsequent correspondence between the President and the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply is printed on page 7 of this issue.

The First Resolution urged the amendment of building codes insofar as they cause unwarranted building costs. A national committee associated with the Building Research Division of the National Research Council is being set up; provincial committees will be established to work in co-operation with it. CPAC Divisions may usefully support the work of these committees, who will continue the studies that led to the publication of the National Building Code in 1941.

Another resolution asked for comparative studies of the ultimate costs of planned and unplanned urban developments. We commented further on this matter in our last issue; part of the toll exacted upon a community by its blighted areas can be ascribed to the cost of non-planning, and some small-scale projects do show concrete savings gained by observing planning principles. We shall continue to draw attention to examples of both kinds in the future.

Groups of Members have concluded further studies of the financing of low rental housing and the establishment of demonstration neighbourhoods, as urged in Resolutions Four and Five. In LAYOUT FOR LIVING No. 12 we pointed to some local planning opportunities in the federal veterans' rental housing program for 1948.

The remaining resolutions instructed the new Council of CPAC to appoint a Film Committee, and to enlarge the national office staff so that a fuller national service could be given to Members. As to the former, an excellent group has agreed to serve, and some films are being considered for purchase for the use of Divisions and Branches of CPAC. As to the latter resolution, we are glad to report:

an addition to cpac staff

To augment the services from the national office in 1948 Council has for some months sought an assistant to the Executive Director. Bearing in mind the discussion of the use of both languages by any association of a national character, Council regards it a stroke of good fortune that a French Canadian has become available. He is Jean Cimon, who joined the national office early in February. Mr. Cimon was graduated in social sciences by Laval, and is working toward his doctorate. His experience in social surveys, and in newspaper and radio work, promises to be a great value to the whole Association. A wider range of knowledge, and the practice of interprofessional teamwork, are needed in CPAC as they are in all phases of planning activity.

nomination à l'office national

CPAC désirait nommer un assistant au directeur exécutif afin d'accroître les services que pourra rendre l'office national en 1948. Comme il a déjà été question de l'usage des deux langues au sein du CPAC, le Conseil est heureux d'annoncer qu'il a retenu les services d'un Canadien de langue française. Il s'agit de Jean Cimon, maître en sociologie de l'université Laval et ancien élève de la faculté des gradués de l'université McGill. Son expérience dans le domaine de l'enquête sociale et de la radio nous sera très utile. Une collaboration assidue entre membres de diverses professions est nécessaire au sein de l'office national; en effet, tout urbanisme digne de ce nom est formé par l'ensemble de diverses professions.

community planning association of canada, ottawa

deep river: new canadian town

Since the war several nations, notably Britain, have studied the problem of building wholly new towns. The creation of a village as a single building operation has often been achieved in the past for military, colonization or industrial purposes. But so far as we know, the only example of a Canadian post-war settlement created at one stroke by a national agency is Deep River, Ontario. The planning experience gained there may well interest our readers.

Deep River is a special case; it was built in a hurry to accommodate in their off-duty hours the research and operational staffs of the federal government's nuclear fission establishment near Chalk River. It is a purely residential colony that had to be planted in the wilderness. Its inhabitants are largely people with urban backgrounds and a high degree of education. The welfare and stability of the new community had to be thought of, not only for its own sake, but because unrest in this place could directly affect the national security. In a sense, the town of Deep River is a social laboratory just as Chalk River is a physical one.

The Site

The place where atomic workers would live was determined within limits by the choice of a site for the Plant itself. The workers would want to live near it, but not *too* near. The research establishment had to be put in relatively unoccupied territory, yet many of the workers were used to a full range of urban services and amenities. Many of them wanted to keep connections with eastern universities from which they came. No one was sure how many workers might ultimately have to be accommodated, so plenty of room for expansion was needed.

The Plant was located up the Ottawa River, more or less 100 miles northwest of the capital. A few miles from the Plant there was found an old Indian campsite on the south bank of the river. It was surrounded by shelving, tree-covered slopes—making a rough half-bowl opening north-eastward to the river and the Laurentian mountains beyond. The land was dry, except at its east and west limits, where rock outcroppings interrupted drainage. The only users were a few summer cottagers, subsistence farmers and squatters. About 15 square miles were acquired between the river and a provincial highway that parallels it less than a mile away. The adjoining lands were largely in public hands—a forest reserve upstream and a military area downstream. Across the river were private timber, fishing and hunting preserves. The frontage on the highway was in private hands, and remains so.

(For aid in preparing these notes the editor wishes to thank the following: the President of the National Research Council, Dr. C. J. Mackenzie; the Vice-President and Director of the Atomic Energy Project, Dr. David Keys; the planning consultant, Prof. John Bland; and the architect in charge, Mr. Peter Dobush.)

The People

Deep River is not an incorporated town. It was managed, up to a year ago, jointly by a wartime defence corporation and the National Research Council. At the end of 1946 the Research Council assumed all aspects of the town's administration. The town was designed in consultation with Professor John Bland of McGill University, and built by contractors with the Crown agencies.

The breadwinners of the new community are of three occupational groups: salaried people with a wide range of scientific skills; hourly-paid assistants in the operation and maintenance of the nuclear fission Plant; and those engaged in maintaining and servicing the town itself. A reflection of the novelty of their work is the fact that the average age of the townspeople is under 30. The senior members of each group are nearly all married men; only about one-quarter of the remainder are unmarried. Very few of the workers live outside the town. The income levels are probably slightly higher than in most single-industry communities.

There are at present about 360 workers living in rented dwellings with their families. A similar number live in the staff hotel and dormitories provided. The total is thus about 1800 people. To meet the variety of family needs and tastes, and yet to attain the required speed of construction, a dozen types of standard one-family houses and small apartments were adopted for the town. These houses had proved themselves in temporary and permanent munitions workers' housing projects; indeed many of them were moved to Deep River from such projects (see photo). Most of them were occupied within a year after the town-site had been chosen. The rentals are very low.

The Plan

The planners of Deep River were thus faced with the problem of developing a new area, and siting nearly 400 buildings—mostly small, and of standardized appearance—upon that area. And they were given little time to solve the problem. One of them says: "Decisions had to be made in the path of the bulldozer." They decided upon ample lots (averaging 50 by 120 feet); with the other requirements this meant immediate development of about 150 acres. The small meadow on the river bank where Indians had camped was chosen as the village common. This would plainly be the focus of the new town. It was clear that the main entrance road from the highway should lead down to this area. The planners chose to place the public buildings (school, community centre, shopping centre, town office and staff hotel) around the ledge that bounds this clearing. Special efforts were made during the construction period to protect natural growth on the town common. (See plan on page 5). The street pattern was made to take advantage of the terraces upon the surrounding slopes, and partly to use roadways already cleared.

To each street they allotted, for both social and visual variety, a mixture of house types. No hedges or other marking of front yard boundaries were permitted. Houses were placed to leave some larger trees standing in their rear yards. The houses are helped to look like

related groups by deliberately leaving an occasional house-lot vacant. The use of heavy mechanical gear for speedy site-clearing led to considerable destruction of tree cover, which had been counted upon to screen the town into several clusters of buildings grouped around small enclosed clearings. In the event, the machinery used to grade roadways, dig pipe-trenches and make building excavations obliterated the intended sense of verdant enclosure; where there was to be a street, the machines cut a swathe nearly 250 feet wide.

The order of construction was governed by progress in preparing the site, by the accommodation needs of the construction crew, and by the availability of materials for the houses. Thus the central barracks were built first, then houses brought in large panels from other projects, and finally those buildings requiring a high proportion of work on the site. The most desirable lots were thought to be near the shore to the west of the staff house; in this "district" the houses of senior members of the community were intended—but bad drainage altered the scheme.

Services

The central group of shops have at their middle a bank and a post office. Other large units in the group include a general store and a grocery store—both operated by large Canadian chains. The shopping centre contains nearly 20,000 square feet of floor space, of which the above four units occupy three-quarters. Other major units are the community caterer (operating staff dining rooms) and the drugstore. Tailor, barber, beauty shop and shoe repair are also located in the shopping centre. A furniture store operates in one of the buildings left standing in another part of the town by the building contractor. Watch and radio repairs are done by townsmen in their own homes, and one of them also looks after telegrams.

Milk, bread and laundry services are supplied from adjoining towns. Plant personnel may take their meals in a restaurant with table service. This place, like the cafeteria where hourly-paid maintenance and service people may eat, is operated by a nationally known catering firm. Most of the shops and services found difficulty at first (as had the planners before them!) in anticipating the needs of the people of the new town.

The roads total nearly five miles in length. They are all lighted at night, the power being distributed in overhead wires. The roads are still all gravel surfaced. Sidewalks are provided only in the block fronting the shopping centre. There are over 160 motor vehicles in the town, about two-thirds of them being private cars. Traffic being entirely local, the drivers give a refreshing right-of-way to pedestrians. The town and Plant include garage spaces for the whole number of vehicles, as well as nearly 300,000 square feet of public parking space in the central area. The provision for parked cars in front of the shop windows has been criticized. No mechanical traffic control is required, beyond designation of some major thoroughfares by "Through Street" signs. Movement of workers to the plant, and of high school students and shoppers to an adjoining larger town (Pembroke) is almost entirely by busses, operated



by the Research Council. There is little trucking, other than the coal supply and snow removal in winter.

Deep River has over sixty miles of power lines, nine miles of water mains, eight miles of sewers, and a central heating plant for the communal buildings. Water is taken from the Ottawa River above the town, and chlorinated; the sewage is treated, and safe effluents flow out into the river well below the settled area. The sewage plant is adequate for three times the present population. There are frequent fire-hydrants and alarm boxes throughout the town, sprinklers in some of the public buildings, and a 50,000 gallon water storage tank on the highest ground on the site. A fire truck is kept in the town garage. Law and order are looked after by a police force of three men; but their authority in the absence of magistrates and a court must depend upon disciplinary action by the employing administration. Houses and common buildings are kept in good order by a staff of nearly eighty workmen.

Institutions

Deep River has a five-room elementary school, staffed by six teachers. It was built by the project but is maintained with aid from the Ontario government. The youth and vitality of the population was apparently underestimated—for the school is already overcrowded. (Out of a population of about 1,800, nearly one-tenth are between 5 and 12 years old. The pre-school group is much larger.) The Roman Catholic Commission is now constructing a separate school on the grounds of the Wylie church, adjacent to the village, which will serve the Roman Catholic children from the village as well as those from the surrounding district. The original village school is built on the central open space, and has its own playing fields. It is administered under a Board of three persons, appointed by the Ontario Minister of Education. The library in the community centre is administered by an elected board.

Upwards of thirty secondary school pupils travel daily by bus to the nearest High School, in Pembroke. The bus schedule affords them almost no chance to engage in after-class activities with their Pembroke schoolmates.

In this isolated and unincorporated dormitory settlement, the most active community groupings centre upon various kinds of recreation. The largest group is the alley-bowling league, which includes nearly half the adult population. Skiing, softball, skating, boating, swimming and tennis groups are popular in that order;



1944

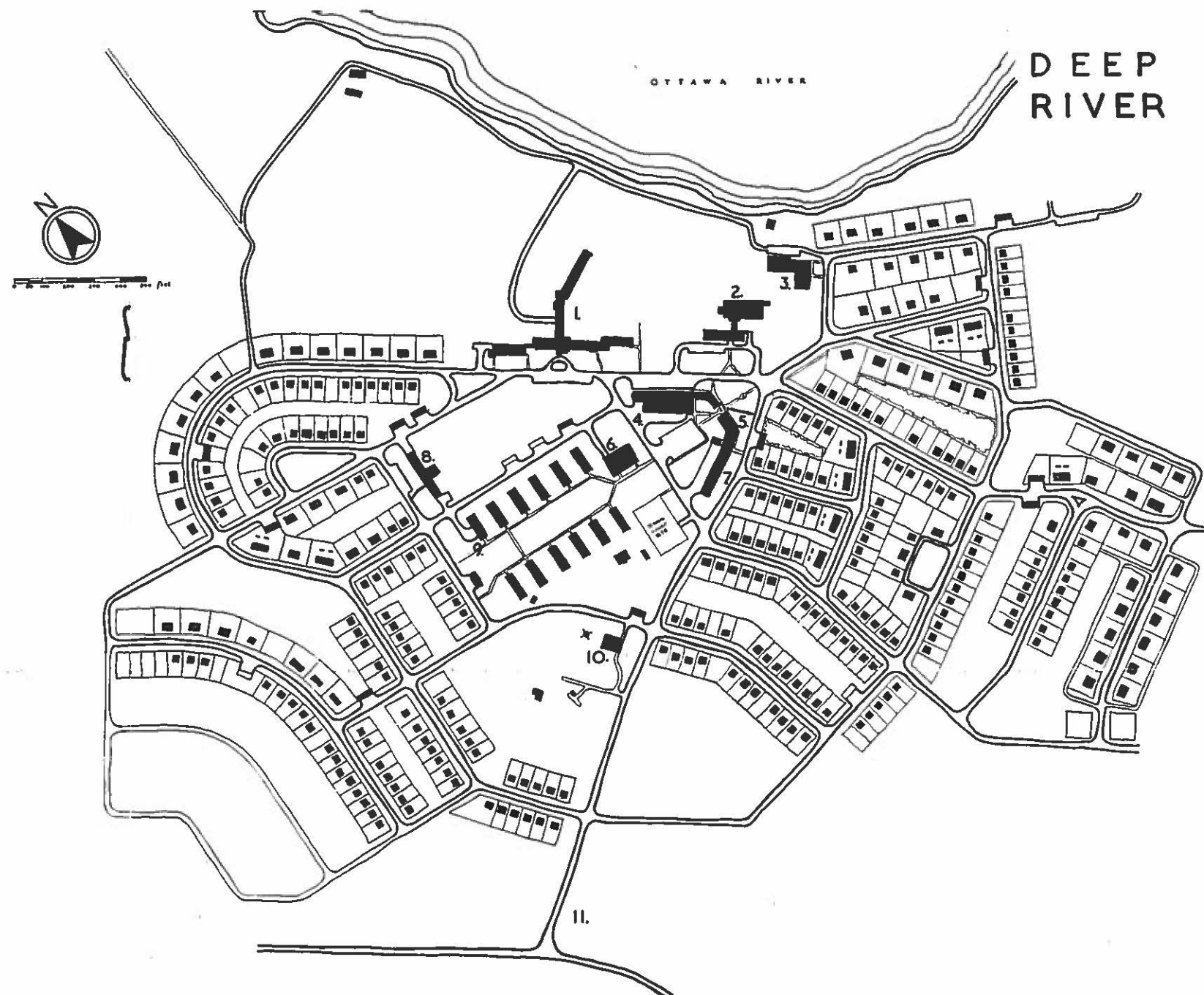
Aerial view of Deep River townsite before construction was begun. The beach along the river, the cluster of buildings at the curve of the highway, and the winding trail leading down through pastureland and tree-covered slopes to what is now the Town Common are all evident. (Photo: RCAF)

1945

Plan of Deep River at about 400 feet to the inch. Highway No. 17 is at the bottom of the plan, leading northwest (left) to North Bay, and southeast (right) to Pembroke and Ottawa. The Ottawa River is at the top of the plan. The principal buildings are as follows:

1. Staff Hotel.
2. Community Centre.
3. Primary School.
4. Shopping Centre.
5. Town Office.
6. Cafeteria.
7. Town Garage.
8. Hospital.
9. Furniture Store.
10. Heating Plant.
11. Roman Catholic Church and School Site.

The Atomic Energy Plant is about 12 miles by road to the southeast.



the last-named sport engages about fifty regular players. The administration has built a community centre in the common area, with assembly halls, bowling-alleys, activity rooms and kitchen; outdoor facilities adjoin it. (See photo.) There is a professional Director of Recreation, who is advised by a representative Steering Committee. The town movies (three nights weekly) are commercially supplied and operated.

Substantial interest groups also include church societies; a Canadian Legion branch; troops of Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Wolf Cubs; camera, chess, dramatic, reading, music and science clubs; short-wave radio enthusiasts; a child study group; a teen-age club, etc. Most of these use the community centre. Their fees appear to be unusually low for such groups. They can arrange refreshments either in the centre or from a canteen on the wide sand beach.

The health of the workers at the nuclear fission project was a major concern. A staff of five doctors, two dentists, fifteen nurses and a number of technicians serves both the Plant and a hospital in the town. But again, as in the schools, the age-composition of the population was miscalculated, with the result that the obstetric ward of the hospital is quite inadequate.

Protestant religious services of non-sectarian character are held in the community centre. The Roman Catholic parish church is located on the highway just outside the town. Separate Church of England services are held. There is a non-sectarian Sunday School.

A citizens' council was created among the scientists before the town was built, apparently motivated by apprehension about the standard of facilities to be

1946

Left: The Shopping Centre on the south side of the principal street, with wide parking area and canopied walk fronting all the shops.

Right: Workers leaving the bus that brought them from the Plant. Beyond, on the north side of the main street and west of the Shopping Centre, is the Staff Hotel and Dining Room. It is on the slope marking the south and west sides of the Town Common. (Photos: NFB)



low rental housing: correspondence with the minister

1

November 20th, 1947.

Right Honourable C. D. Howe,
Minister of Reconstruction and Supply,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Minister,

The Community Planning Association of Canada held its first National Conference in Montreal in October last. Some three hundred delegates from every province of Canada attended, and our lengthy and considered discussion of the problem of housing the Canadian people issued in the following resolution:

THAT WHEREAS THE PRESENT national housing legislation does not contain provision for the construction and operation of housing within the reach of low-income families;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference urge the Federal Government to institute a national low-rental housing program, with such financial and technical measures as will produce decent housing for the low-income families of the nation at rents they can afford to pay. CARRIED.

It is my duty as President of this Association to draw to your attention, and to that of your colleagues in the Government, this conviction which we of the Community Planning Association of Canada share with many other Canadians.

I attach a copy of our November bulletin "Layout for Living" No. 9, in which you will find a short account of the Conference at which this Resolution was passed. The bulletin also contains the names of the officers of the Association, and the texts of other resolutions agreed to by our Members in Montreal. I shall be glad to provide you with any other information about this Association, or about the considerations leading to the above Resolution, at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

R. E. G. Davis,
President, CPAC

2

OFFICE OF
THE MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLY

November 27th, 1947.

Dear Mr. Davis,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of November 20th containing the resolution passed at the recent meeting of the Community Planning Association of Canada held in Montreal.

Insofar as the current policy of the Government is concerned, I would like to refer you to a paper I prepared for *Public Affairs* of October 1947, as published by Dalhousie University. This gives the general picture of all efforts made to meet the housing problem. It will be noted that in that paper I pointed out the constitutional aspect in that housing is a function of property and civil rights and as such is a matter within the jurisdiction of provincial and municipal governments. Furthermore, that as a result, direct participation by the Dominion Government in a housing programme is circumscribed, and action taken is confined to making credit more readily available for residential construction.

During the war and transition period, however, the Dominion in co-operation with municipalities, entered the housing field directly to build accommodation under its War Emergency powers. Originally the purpose was to provide dwellings for war workers moving to key industrial centres. In the post-war period, however, the purpose has been to provide accommodation for returned veterans. I might emphasize, however, that our policy in respect of housing is restricted to the provision of accommodation for veterans.

In the 1948 programme it is anticipated that, providing there is municipal co-operation, some 12,000 units for veterans will be constructed for rental purposes, with rents varying from \$27 to \$37 per unit.

Insofar as technical measures are concerned, I might say that a Construction Division has been established recently in the National Research Council. The role and object of this Division is to study the use of new materials and of new techniques in construction to promote economy and efficiency in the house building trade.

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

C. D. Howe,
Minister.

3

January 17th, 1948.

Dear Mr. Minister,

Thank you for your letter of November 27th, in which you refer to the resolution on low-rental housing presented by the Community Planning Association of Canada from its first annual meeting in Montreal. The Council of the Association, which met in Ottawa in December, has asked me to reply to your letter, and to offer a specific proposal.

The members of the Association, with their knowledge of conditions in communities across the country, are very conscious of the need for a low-rental housing program; until low-income families now in emergency shelters and crowded into slum areas are decently housed, no community can regard itself as having accomplished the most essential part of its planning. Our members are also keenly aware of the constitutional and operational difficulties involved. The Council of the Association believes that not all these difficulties are being faced and tackled frankly. Consequently, such is the increasing intensity of the nation's housing crisis that even the present stop-gap devices are likely to fail to reach their short-term objectives. The only alternative that we think holds promise is to undertake a realistic, long-term and positive housing program.

Your article in the October issue of "Public Affairs" points out the constitutional and practical barriers which prevent the Federal Government itself providing the operating agency for low-rental housing. You also point out that the Provinces and Municipalities have in very few cases provided themselves with the necessary authority and management agencies for the purpose. Granting these facts, they must be attributed very largely to the lack of provisions in the National Housing Act for loans from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to local authorities, and for federal contribution to rent reduction funds, without which no municipality in Canada could operate much low-rental accommodation.

It therefore seems to us that the Federal Government must take the initiative in relieving this stalemate. We believe there would be considerable value in a properly constituted conference to define the respective roles of the three levels of government in this matter. Public understanding of the problems involved has surely reached a sufficiently mature state to justify the hope that clear-cut plans could emerge from such a conference. The conference should be convened by Federal authority to include Provincial and Municipal representation. It should be called soon in order to set out the general framework upon which a low-rental housing program can be conducted in this country.

Undoubtedly time and determination (in inverse proportions) will be needed to prepare the legislative and administrative scaffolding for such a program. This is all the more reason why the preparatory stages should be begun without delay.

May I add that while this is a widely based citizen organization, it has no intention of becoming a 'pressure group' for any partial interests. We enjoy the most cordial relations with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and our provincial Divisions are developing like relationships with provincial and local planning and housing agencies. It is our endeavour in these and all our proposals to be both constructive and realistic. I await your reaction to the present proposal, which it will be my duty to report, together with our recent correspondence, to the membership of the Association at large.

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

R. E. G. Davis,
President, CPAC.

Continued foot of page six

provided. Efforts were made to continue this committee in altered form as the Town Council. The community's weekly paper supported the idea, and elections were held. General interest in the Council was disappointingly slight—perhaps because this "town council" would have neither authority nor funds. Its disappearance leaves the Recreation Steering Committee as the most active element of self-government in the community. The recreational and religious groupings thus serve to integrate the community, which by its nature is divided into sub-groups, as between family-life and dormitory-eating-hall life. Normal machinery of local government, with its attendant emphasis on full civic responsibility for community affairs, might strengthen the bonds of integration.

Effect on Adjoining Areas

Deep River was not conceived as part of a regional plan; and its peculiar purpose and constitution prevented its fitting wholly into the pattern intended in provincial planning legislation. Nonetheless, the arrival of hundreds of urban families—with incomes to spend and needs to satisfy—was bound to cause a readjustment of the surrounding, relatively simple economy. On the railway, a flag stop has become a busy little station. The highway terminus of the Deep River Road—the nearest point for the growth of uncontrolled, marginal enterprises—is already becoming the dreary string of gas stations, tourist huts and hot-dog shanties regrettably familiar at other rural road junctions. The Roman Catholic families share an elementary school with others outside Deep River. Pembroke High School serves many other rural areas besides Deep River, and recently in recognition of this the County Council has taken over the Pembroke School and has formed a school area, serving the people within 30 miles of Pembroke on all sides. Pembroke shops experience every Thursday a mass of new demands, some of them more to be expected in a university town than in a railway-and-rural-market town. On the other hand, some of the new Deep River shopkeepers are pleased to find that as much as 25% of their business is quite independent of pay cheques from the government Plant. A few families whose heads are employed in the Plant have built homesteads outside the Deep River community. Also, while organized sports like tennis and baseball are provided for in the town, the hikers, skiers and hunters of the community roam further afield.

The planners, foreseeing some of these regional effects, recommended at an early stage that surrounding municipalities, the provincial and federal governments and the railway company should co-operate to apply a regional plan. The Ontario Planning and Development Act which provides for the creation of a "planning area" has been in force nearly two years. Plainly it should be invoked in the Deep River area.

Conclusion

Thus a new town, to function as its planners hope, needs sensitive attention to many factors beyond the

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construction drawings. In the plan itself, the location of physical facilities can materially help to weld the new community—for instance, by providing a single place for communal eating. The planners of new towns need in advance the fullest possible information as to intended administrative arrangements—as for instance, whether there will be a single or duplicate elementary school systems, and what will be the form of local government.

We said at the outset that this community was a special case. Most of our readers are concerned with alterations and additions to an existing town, rather than with the creation of a wholly new one. Yet even in designing alterations and additions, there is ample opportunity to apply lessons learned from a laboratory model; a naval architect refitting an old vessel does not spurn whatever has been proven at small scale in a testing basin. Deep River is on the whole successful—certainly far more so than it would have been if less care had been taken to plan it. Its inhabitants are given community advantages and facilities because they are engaged in work of national importance. Let's see if we can build similar features into all our communities—for their own sakes.

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OFFICE OF
THE MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLY

January 24th, 1948.

Dear Mr. Davis,

I wish to acknowledge your letter of January 17th in connection with Federal Housing Policy in general, and the desirability of holding a conference attended by the three levels of Government.

As regards Federal policy, I think I have made this clear in my previous letter, as well as on various occasions when I have spoken in public. As a result, I have no further comments to make at this time.

On the other hand, I am not unmindful of the advantages that might accrue in furthering housing activities by a successful conference, attended by the three levels of Government. You will note, I have indicated a 'successful' conference, and in saying that I refer to a conference where all representatives would be interested in the problem, and prepared to assume respective responsibilities as a result of decisions reached at the conference. An unsuccessful conference would, in my opinion, be more harmful to the general cause than if no such conference was held.

Up to the present time we have had considerable co-operation from the majority of the municipalities across Canada. With one or two exceptions however, little interest has been shown by the provincial governments in housing. Consequently, I believe that the time is not as yet opportune to hold a meeting of the three levels of Government on housing. It would seem to me that the prior step must be to foster interest by the provincial governments.

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

C. D. Howe,
Minister.

SEVEN